

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 082117

STADIS//////////
LIMDIS - FOR CHARGE FROM HARROP

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, ET, US

SUBJECT: NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1378

1. APPRECIATE REPORT REFTEL ON YOUR LATEST EFFORTS
OBTAIN AGREEMENT FOR NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR. BEFORE TAKING
ANY FURTHER STEPS WITH ETHIOPIANS, I WOULD LIKE YOUR
VIEWS ON WHERE WE STAND AND WHAT MIGHT BE THE MOST
EFFECTIVE WAY FOR US TO PROCEED TOWARD IMPROVING DIALOGUE
WITH ETHIOPIA.

2. AN ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE FOR TAKING NO FRESH INITIA-
TIVES WITH EPMG TO RAISE THE SUBJECT OF AGREEMENT.
CERTAINLY, WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO THEM THROUGH NUMEROUS
DEMARCHES, INCLUDING DAVID AARON'S LETTER TO MENGISTU,
OUR SINCERE INTEREST IN BUILDING A DIALOGUE WITH ETHIOPIA
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AND THE ROLE OUR AMBASSADOR COULD PLAY IN SUCH A DIALOGUE.
THEREFORE, TO APPROACH THE EPMG YET ANOTHER TIME ON THE
SUBJECT OF AGREEMENT COULD RISK OVERSTATING OUR CASE AND
EXAGGERATING IN THEIR EYES THE IMPORTANCE ETHIOPIA HAS
FOR US. IT MIGHT ALSO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AS THE
RADICALS IN THE DIRG MAY ACTUALLY BE ENCOURAGED IN THEIR
APPARENTLY INTRANSIGENT OPPOSITION TO AGREEMENT, AID, AND

OTHER SIGNS OF BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH US BY OUR OVER EAGERNESS.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE FOR APPROACHING MOFA ONE MORE TIME AND URGING ACTION ON AGREEMENT. THIS PRESUMABLY WOULD AT LEAST SHORE UP MODERATES IN MOFA WHO WERE APPARENTLY HEARTENED BY OUR PROTEST OVER MOFA'S STATEMENT ON DJIBOUTI OF MARCH 25. IF A NEW DEMARCHE WERE MADE, TALKING POINTS COULD INCLUDE:

-- EXPRESSION OF OUR DESIRE FOR AGREEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO WE CAN CONTINUE TO BUILD ON CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE AND RELATIONSHIP BEGUN DURING THE AARON VISIT. IT WAS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT WE RECENTLY BRIEFED YOU ON THE MOOSE MISSION TO MOGADISCIO.

-- OUR CONCERN THAT IMPETUS BEHIND NEW DIRECTION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP MAY BE LAGGING. OUR FEARS ARE PROMPTED IN PARTICULAR BY EPMG FAILURE TO GRANT AGREEMENT AND TO SIGN THE UPPER DIDESSA AID PROJECT.

-- GRANTING AGREEMENT FOR OUR AMBASSADORIAL NOMINEE AT THIS TIME WOULD GIVE EPMG EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE ITS DESIRE TO WORK WITH WESTERN NATIONS AS WELL AS SOVIET BLOC AND TO REAFFIRM ITS BASIC COMMITMENT
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TO A NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY.

4. IF OUR CONCLUSION FAVORS A RENEWED APPROACH, TIMING COULD BE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT. WHILE WE DO NOT LOOK UPON MENGISTU AS THE PROTECTOR OF AMERICAN INTERESTS IN ETHIOPIA, NONETHELESS WE DO HAVE A SENSE THAT APPROACHES BASED ON PRAGMATISM AND ON ETHIOPIA'S DESIRE FOR TRUE NON-ALIGNMENT ARE LIKELY TO BE MORE PERSUASIVE WITH HIM THAN WITH OTHERS IN THE DIRG. SINCE HE SEEMS AT THE MOMENT TO BE OUT OF ACTION, AND PROBABLY OUT OF THE COUNTRY, IT MIGHT BE BEST TO DELAY A FURTHER APPROACH UNTIL HE IS KNOWN TO BE BACK IN A POSITION FROM WHICH TO INFLUENCE DIRG DECISIONS.

5. ANY COMMENTS ON THESE DIVERGING POINTS OF VIEW WOULD BE APPRECIATED. IF YOU FAVOR MAKING A FURTHER APPROACH, YOU MAY HAVE ADDITIONAL TALKING POINTS TO SUGGEST.

COOPER

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